

25 March 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: Notes on NSC Meeting, 25 March 1954

DCI

Indochina - Situation not much changed. Viet Minh may be a little low on ammunition for the next attack. French have been flying in reinforcements, but no more troops - have consolidated their posts around the main center into four (4) positions and have opened road south to Isabelle and the airstrip. Have moved out about half their wounded - unfortunate helicopter accident day before yesterday -- Lt. Gambiez killed -- son of Gen. Gambiez, Navarre's Chief of Staff.

Viet Minh tunneling up to French positions to avoid long rush in field of fire to French positions - not tunneling under outposts. French using napalm with considerable effect on east and west of main position.

DCI read last two paragraphs of Board memorandum on Dien Bien Phu.

PRESIDENT

Asked DCI why Viet Minh Division 308 moved down to Luang Prabang and back without French following it up -- 13 battalions at Luang Prabang -- some of them should be able to be freed to move onto the rear of Viet Minh forces around Dien Bien Phu.

RIDGEWAY

Explained he had asked Ely the same question and why the French hadn't driven West from the Delta to relieve pressure on Dien Bien Phu, and had been told that guerrilla resistance prevented it.

PRESIDENT

Asked if that meant French couldn't move anywhere unless they were airlifted and was told that seemed to be the case. President then asked DCI if Navarre had a free hand in Indochina or was he controlled from Paris.

DCI

Answered that it seemed that he was free to act within the Navarre Plan but Dien Bien Phu was the Viet Minh plan, not the Navarre Plan.

PRESIDENT

Observed it didn't seem there was anybody out there interested in winning the war -- nobody on our side.

Burma -

DCI

Described Burmese Communist insurgency, KMT evacuation and easing of that problem, and Thai Autonomous Area in Southwest Yunnan. Referred to the Karen independence effort - autonomous state long fighting with Burmese - indications Karens and Communists might make common cause against Rangoon government. Situation not immediately critical, but is a dangerous soft spot.

Egypt -

New trouble between Naguib and Nasr. Naguib wanting elections and working with Wafd and Moslem Brotherhood for support, Nasr and RCC opposed to this - complicates situation of new British proposals on Suez Canal base. [REDACTED]

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You asked to be reminded to check and see what the Erskine Subcommittee of the "Saturday Committee" was now doing with regard to the larger Southeast Asia issue. The JCS are working on the military aspects of Indochina.

You also asked to be reminded that your brother had mentioned to you that Zarubin had called on him yesterday with another strong protest on the matter of [REDACTED]. I believe you wish to speak to your brother on this after checking with [REDACTED] as to advisability of Zarubin contact with the subject.

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